

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-11 H-02 INR-07 INT-05
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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3992

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

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AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

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USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, ENRG, BU, UR

SUBJECT: BULGARIAN WORKERS TO PARTICIPATE IN OIL AND GASS PROJECTS
IN SOVIET UNION

1. PARTY NEWSPAPER RABOTNICHESKO DELO OF JAN 10 CARRIED
ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IN 1978 BULGARIA WILL EXPAND ITS PARTI-
CIPATION IN OIL AND NATURAL GAS PROJECTS IN USSR. BULGARIAN
CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ARE TO BUILD COMPRESSOR FACILITIES
AND "OTHER INSTALLATIONS", AND WILL ASSIST IN CONSTRUCTING
A NEW GAS PROCESSING PLANT AT MUBAREK IN UZBEKISTAN. AS
IS THE CASE WITH OTHER SIMILAR PROJECTS, BULGARIA WILL
RECEIVE OIL AND NATURAL GAS IN RETURN FOR THIS DEVELOPMENT
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ASSISTANCE TO THE USSR. THERE WAS NO MENTION OF THE AMOUNT
OF SUCH FUTURE DELIVERIES, THE TIME FRAME FOR COMPLETION
OF THE PROJECTS, NOR THAT THE ABOVE PROJECTS INVOLVE
CEMA-WIDE COOPERATION.

2. THE ARTICLE ALSO STATED THAT BULGARIAN WORKERS WILL
PARTICIPATE IN CONSTRUCTION ON THE "FIFTH LEG" OF THE

ORENBURG GAS PIPELINE IN THE CARPATHIANS.

3. COMMENT: BULGARIAN ECONOMIC PLANNERS ARE INCREASINGLY MINDFUL THAT USSR IS NOT UNLIMITED SOURCE OF RAW MATERIALS, ESPECIALLY FUELS AND OIL. HENCE, TO EXTENT THAT SUCH DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS ENSURE FUTURE DELIVERIES OF OIL AND OTHER RAW MATERIALS, THESE PROJECTS REPRESENT A PLUS FOR BULGARIA.

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, BULGARIA IS A DEVELOPING COUNTRY, AND AID FLOWS SHOULD BE DIRECTED INWARD, NOT OUTWARD. THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR THE KIND OF AID BULGARIA IS BEING ASKED TO SUPPLY: CONSTRUCTION LABOR. CONSTRUCTION SECTOR HAS BEEN PERENNIAL WEAK SPOT. IN AN ECONOMY WHICH IS MARKEDLY LABOR INEFFICIENT, EXPORTING LABOR, ESPECIALLY HIGHLY VALUED CONSTRUCTION LABOR, REPRESENTS DRAIN ON DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

5. IN ADDITION, FEW SKILLED WORKERS SEEM ENTHUSED ABOUT WORKING IN USSR. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE WHOSE PARENTS HAVE BOTH WORKED ABROAD (IN IRAQ AND LIBYA), USSR IS NOT ATTRACTIVE TO BULGARIAN WORKERS AND TECHNICIANS. HE SAID PAY WAS CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN FOR SIMILAR POSITIONS IN ARAB COUNTRIES AND LIVING CONDITIONS ARE NOT AS GOOD. HE SAID EVEN EAST GERMANY IS PREFERRED. END COMMENT.
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